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Book Notices.

KOSTERS' WIEDERHERSTELLUNG ISRAELS.*

Kosters' proposition is that the three chief events constituting the restoration of Israel in the Persian period occurred in the order: The building of the temple, the repair of the city wall, the return of the *Gôla* from Babylon. He finds that the temple was begun under Darius, and was built, not by returned exiles, but by Palestinian Jews who had not been in captivity; likewise that the repair of the city wall was accomplished by Nehemiah and his company, with the assistance of residents of Jerusalem, but without help from any exiles commonly supposed to have preceded him from Babylon; and that after the completion of the walls occurred, in order, the events of Nehemiah, ch. 13; Ezra, chs. 7-10; Nehemiah, chs. 9 and 10 (the constitution of the new community), and Nehemiah, ch. 8. The order of his discussion corresponds with the chronological sequence.

He adopts without modification Schrader's proofs of the late date of the commencement of the temple building, pausing only to reassert, as against Van Hoonacker, the value in support of this theory of Hag. 2:18, and Zech. 8:9, 10. This view assumes of course the unhistorical character of Ezra 3:8-13.

From this point the argument moves rapidly, to say the least. Kosters rejects Ezra 3:1-7, because it is extremely unlikely that sacrifices had been suspended in Jerusalem during the exile, and because the offerings made are represented to be in accord with P, not yet adopted. He decides that ch. 4 is so inseparably connected with 3:8-13 that our conclusion about the latter involves ch. 4 in the same judgment. In a footnote he denies it even the partial credibility accorded it by Kuenen and Schrader. Ch. 1, he continues, is involved in the same adverse judgment; for such an edict of Cyrus the Jews would not venture to disregard, and besides, the edict is the kernel of the whole chapter as a literary product. The edict being unhistorical, the remainder is valueless as a witness to an early return of exiles, and this must be proven entirely apart from ch. 1.

Who then were the Jews who built the temple? Was there in Jerusalem even in the first years of Darius a company of returned exiles? Kosters finds in Haggai and Zechariah no reference to such, and he is

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positive that some mention would have been made of the fact of 40,000 captives having returned to the city but a few years before. These prophets designate the people by the same names as are employed by Jeremiah for those left in Jerusalem after its capture. They do not call them Israel, as Ezra does upon his return with the Gôlá. Moreover they speak of their own times as a period of continuing punishment, and look forward to some change in the near future similar to the return as predicted by the earlier prophets.

Kosters now returns to Ezra, chs. 5 and 6. These chapters he analyzes into two documents on the basis of the discrepant statements as to the date of the beginning of the temple, and as to the place where the decree of Cyrus was sought and found, and the confusion between the quoted decree of Cyrus and that of Darius. One document (5:1-5, 6-10; 6:6-15, except minor redactional phrases) correctly gives the date of the temple building, but is otherwise not entirely trustworthy, even after rejecting redactional notes. The second document (5:11-17; 6:1; 3-5) is a tendency composition ascribing the glory of the new enterprise to Cyrus, but knowing nothing of a Gôlá returning in Cyrus' time, or of an interruption of the work as stated in ch. 4. The Chronicler's view of matters is a natural evolution from this second document. The reader will notice, in passing, the necessary assumption of the same tendency in the source as is ascribed to the Chronicler, the explanation being, of course, far less easy to find.

The list of "the children of the province that went up out of the captivity" (Ezra, ch. 2; Nehemiah, ch. 7) is next examined. As it stands it is a clear witness to the early return. It has come into Ezra from Nehemiah as the succeeding context shows; but even there it is not original, for Ezra could not use and would not insert "the book of the genealogy of them which came up at the first." We venture to ask if the Chronicler is not outdoing himself in inserting a list that is entirely inappropriate and prefacing it by a statement that fits neither context nor list and is, by the way, a direct falsehood.

The title calls for a list, not of exiles who had returned, but of inhabitants of the province who had been exiles. The distinction between them and inhabitants who had not been in captivity is most naturally made after the organization of the community. Kosters holds, moreover, that the basis of inclusion in the list is not return from Babylon in spite of the statement, but the possession of unmixed genealogy. The passage further betrays itself by representing as contemporaneous, men and movements which are, in fact, extended over a long interval. The Chronicler's statement, entirely unsupported, that Zerubbabel and Joshua were of the captivity, is contrary to the strong evidence from the prophets.

The second chapter concerns the repair of the wall. What is the evidence that Ezra's company was present at the time? In the (trust-

worthy) section of Nehemiah's memoirs preserved in Neh. 1-7:5, there is no reference to the presence of returned exiles. The inquiry and answer in 1:2, 3 concern those who had been left behind in Jerusalem at the captivity. This, by the way, would require a rather unusual force for the Hebrew phrase. The interpretation is favored by the tenor of the prayer (5-11), which implies no recent alteration in exilic conditions. The redemption of 5-8 was of the poor in Judea. The list of repairers (Nehemiah, ch. 3) contains only a few names identical with names in Ezra's company, and the men who bear these names can be identical in only one case, viz., that of Meshullam; but Meshullam was a common name, and its occurrence in the two lists does not prove the men to be one and the same. It is now improbable that not one of such a company as is described in Ezra, ch. 8, should be among the repairers of the wall if they were in Jerusalem at the time. The statement of Neh. 12:36, that Ezra was present at the dedication of the walls is proven to Kusters by the supplementary manner of its insertion to be the work of the Chronicler and therefore valueless. Nehemiah, as Haggai and Zechariah, never calls the people Israel.

The whole narrative of the destruction of the wall (Ezra 4:6-23) is rejected because the colonization claimed is poorly vouched, the writer misunderstood the value of the term Apharsathchites (*cf.* 5:6; 6:6), the correspondence resembles too strongly that of chs. 5 and 6, it is improbable that there was any book such as is cited in 4:15, and it is unlikely that an enterprise so arduous and novel as Nehemiah's is represented to have been could have been accomplished so short a time before him.

In the narratives of the events which followed the building of the wall our author finds serious disorder. The organization of the new community is the center of interest, and this is recorded in Nehemiah, chs. 9 and 10, although the Chronicler has given in Ezra 6:21, what he would have understood as that event. Neh. 13 makes no mention of these occurrences, assuming neither the enforcement nor the non-enforcement of the obligations then assumed; on the other hand the conditions and provisions of ch. 13 seem naturally to precede chs. 9 and 10. The formation of the community, however, preceded the promulgation of the priestly legislation, ch. 8, for the proceedings of chs. 9 and 10 are either definitely in accord with the earlier codes, or stand logically between them and P, or, in the case of the titles, are like P in this particular, the outgrowth of the recent experiences of the community. But if ch. 8 was after chs. 9 and 10 it goes without saying that ch. 7 (*cf.* above) also belongs after them. The Chronicler has removed the list of the "chiefs of the province that dwelt in Jerusalem" now in ch. 9 from its original position after 7:5, and given its place to the later list. From a minute analysis of 12:1-26 Kusters concludes that the origin of the priestly families dates from the time of Darius, not Cyrus; that ch. 7

including, as it does, two of these families, cannot be referred to the earlier date, and that verse 26 preserves in the order Nehemiah-Ezra, a reminiscence of the real sequence.

Ezra, chs. 7-10, follows Nehemiah, ch. 13, but precedes Nehemiah, chs. 9-10, for it gives the occasion of the organization into a community, Ezra's Gôlâ forming the nucleus.

In venturing a criticism of this monograph, we propose to confine ourselves to the general method employed rather than to descend into details.

1. At the outset there arises of necessity the question of the credibility of the Chronicler, denied absolutely by Kusters. Every sort of motive is assigned to him except a willingness to conform to facts as stated by his authorities. This part of the hypothesis is likely to prove very popular with Old Testament scholars in these days. And yet a word or two may be said in behalf even of the Chronicler. The degree of credence to be accorded to the Chronicler in the case of unverifiable statements depends upon the ratio existing between his statements proven true and those proven false. Naturally the task before him was largely a criticism of his authorities. It is clear that he often departs from them, and, it cannot be denied, many times to his discredit; but what of the instances when we know he follows his authorities? Shall he have no credit for so doing? He certainly deserves it in proportion to their trustworthiness, and in departing from them he deserves blame only in the same proportion.

If written documents were accessible to him, there is the same probability that he followed those which are now lost as that he followed those now extant with which we can test his statements. There is no greater probability that he falsifies in the face of authorities or invents when all sources are lacking, in matters where we cannot detect him than in matters known to us from other narratives. Now in particular instances upon which we must pass judgment, it may be that we are not warranted in placing absolute reliance upon the Chronicler's unsupported statements; but it still remains true that there is a chance, and by no means a small chance, that he is correct. If his statement cannot carry certainty with it, neither, on the other hand, can certainty be reached against it in any other way than by disproving it with as much care as if it were that of an ordinarily credible witness. Such care Kusters does not take in his treatment of the Chronicler.

2. Before he lays down his pen our author has subjected the whole book, Ezra-Nehemiah, to a searching analysis. Introducing this really introductory matter *passim* in the body of his discussion, he by that very fact gives the impression, which is borne out by individual instances, that the analysis is conducted in the interest of his theory. He does not distinguish between his theory as an assumed basis for literary criticism, and his theory as based on and necessarily growing

out of his sources previously and independently rectified by an impartial critical analysis. The treatment of Neh. 12:27-43 well illustrates the fault.

3. The importance of the fairest and most generous treatment of these critical questions is obvious as soon as it is appreciated to what an extent the argument is from silence. The force of the discussion is largely broken by the impression, easily gained, that positive witness is being lightly tossed aside on the strength of a questionable analysis. For example the testimony of Ezra, ch. 1, is set aside by about three-fourths of a page of very general remark; and yet Kusters' proof that no exiles returned under Cyrus is that they are not referred to. He fails to treat his subject matter with sufficient seriousness at points which are in fact critical for him.

4. The criticism already made passes easily into the complaint of Wellhausen that there is a lack of independent concurrent testimony. There is a constant increase of doubt as one reads. Equally deft handling of the narratives might lead to any one of several theories of historical sequence. The inevitableness of this particular inference does not appear, notwithstanding the assertions of the author made, naturally enough perhaps, at especially weak points.

5. Kusters fails to note and to take into account the fragmentary character of the records of the period. His task is in part surmising what the missing documents would reveal. This fragmentary nature of the records operates to increase the possibility that Kusters has hit upon the truth, but at the same time it increases the possibility that some other theory is the correct one; meanwhile it becomes less and less easy to prove the extant records wrong. The treatment which the social and religious problems of the period received cannot be followed lucidly in the fragmentary narratives now in our hands; there are long stretches of time that are dark to us which may have made important contributions to the solution of those problems. It was a time of confusion and of clashing of interests, both religious and political. It is scarcely to be expected that the logical order of events will always have been followed. It is conceivable that the prophets do not allude to returned exiles because they were few in number, or lacking zeal for Jehovah, or mere adventurers; perhaps Haggai does include them, only not by name, in 1:4 *sqq.* In like manner it is easy to account for Nehemiah's silence as to Ezra and his work, without reversing the order of the two men and without adopting any view more radical than that. It is by no means inconceivable that Ezra's company could have been in Jerusalem without being mentioned as builders on the wall.

6. Literary Criticism seems to be a useful and handy creature, but there is a little danger that for that very reason he will be overworked. Fortunately it is rare yet to find a theory of history based so absolutely upon the results of literary analysis. Kusters' use of Ezra, chs. 5 and

6, is strange, to say the least. He entitles the section, "Testimony of the sources used by the Chronicler in Ezra, chs. 5 and 6," and then for the first time proceeds to the analysis. He finds two documents, one directly favoring him, the other indirectly, by showing an earlier stage of the Chronicler's false view. This source ascribes the building of the temple to Cyrus; but Kusters did not once allude to the existence of such a source in his discussion of Ezra, ch. 1.

7. The purpose assigned to the Chronicler in falsifying his authorities is to show the fulfilment of the prophecies of the return of the exiles and of the service rendered by Cyrus. But the interpretation of the predictions in accordance with which exiles were to take the initiative in the restoration and Cyrus was to play an important part, could not have sprung up after the restoration had been accomplished on a different plan, and events had occurred which made such a fulfilment impossible. The Chronicler was not the only one to be impressed with those predictions; they were before Israel during the captivity, and it is strange if their actions were not moulded according to them. We should expect that an effort would be made to carry out the prophets' programme, especially as it was not at all an unnatural one. If it was tried and failed we might expect some word to that effect and some change of policy announced by the prophets. In his preface Kusters draws attention to the marvelous transformation wrought in Jerusalem in the Persian period. His theory leaves the change unaccounted for. An influx of new life from Babylon was needed and was expected, and to us Kusters does not seem to have proved that it was not received. It is not at all necessary to assume, with him, that the arrival of the exiles will be witnessed by the use of the name Israel. In general, Israel was the name of an organized body, not of certain individuals; but even so, its use might vary widely in different writers.

While the author's main thesis does not appear proven, he deserves thanks for drawing our attention to the comparative unimportance of any early returns that may have occurred. He has made it probable that the Chronicler has overestimated their importance. We may suppose that not a few bands, of various sizes and degrees of organization, took advantage of the confusion of Babylon to return to Palestine; that they were absorbed in the population which they found there, and only upon the arrival of the large, organized bands under Ezra and Nehemiah was there energy enough for the great undertakings of the Restoration.

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